

Joshua 15:39

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,

Analysis

Lachish, and Bozkath, and Eglon,

Lachish (לָכִישׁ, lachish) ranks among Canaan's most important cities, second only to Jerusalem in Judah. Archaeological excavations have uncovered massive fortifications, a palace-fort, and the famous Lachish Letters—ostraca providing insight into Judean military affairs before Babylon's conquest. The city's capture by Joshua (10:31-32) demonstrated divine power, as Lachish's formidable defenses made it seemingly impregnable. Later history proved tragic: Sennacherib besieged it (2 Kings 18:14, 17; Isaiah 36:2), and Babylon destroyed it (Jeremiah 34:7). The inclusion of Lachish in Judah's inheritance shows God's faithfulness—what seemed impossible was given to His people.

Bozkath (בֹּזְקָתַי, botsqath) appears elsewhere as the hometown of King Josiah's mother (2 Kings 22:1), giving this otherwise minor city royal significance. The name possibly derives from roots meaning "swelling" or "eminence," perhaps indicating a hill or elevated site. That a seemingly insignificant town produced the queen mother demonstrates God's sovereign choices transcending human status and expectation.

Eglon (עִגְלוֹן, eglon) was another city captured in Joshua's southern campaign (10:34-35), named after the Moabite king whom Ehud assassinated (Judges 3:12-30). The city's name possibly derives from egel (עֵגֶל, "calf"), suggesting either topography or cattle-raising significance. Its quick conquest (one day, 10:35) contrasted with heavily fortified sites, demonstrating that victory depends on God's power, not human strength.

Historical Context

Lachish (Tell ed-Duweir) is one of the most extensively excavated sites in Israel. The city occupied 18 acres with walls 19 feet thick and a massive gate complex. The "Lachish reliefs" in Sennacherib's palace at Nineveh depict the Assyrian siege in gruesome detail, showing the city's strategic and symbolic importance. Archaeological evidence confirms violent destruction in the Late Bronze Age (Joshua's period) and later destructions by Assyria (701 BCE) and Babylon (586 BCE). The Lachish Letters, written on pottery shards just before Babylon's final assault, preserve desperate communications between military outposts. Eglon (Tell el-Hesi or Tel Miqne) also shows Late Bronze Age destruction. These cities controlled the Shephelah's main valleys, making their conquest essential for Israelite security.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

Study Questions

1. How does God's gift of seemingly impregnable cities like Lachish encourage your faith when facing overwhelming obstacles?
2. What does Bozkath producing a queen mother teach about God's use of unlikely people and places for His redemptive purposes?
3. How should the archaeological confirmation of these cities' existence and destruction strengthen your confidence in Scripture's historical reliability?

Interlinear Text

לַכִּי	וּבְצֶלְתַּי	אֶגְלוֹן:
Lachish	and Bozkath	and Eglon
H3923	H1218	H5700

Additional Cross-References

Joshua 10:3 (Parallel theme): Wherefore Adoni-zedek king of Jerusalem sent unto Hoham king of Hebron, and unto Piram king of Jarmuth, and unto Japhia king of Lachish, and unto Debir king of Eglon, saying,

2 Kings 22:1 (Parallel theme): Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.

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